Hi everybody, Tyler Rominger here from [Ministry Designs](). I'm here to do another church website review.

Today we're going to be talking about Church of the City. Church of the City is a church in Nashville. It's a relatively new church. They're doing some phenomenal things down there. Darren Whitehead was a pastor on staff at Willow Creek Church in Chicagoland area and a couple of years ago he went down and planted in Nashville and they've seen some explosive growth over the course of the last couple of years. And so, because of the things that they're doing, I wanted to take a look at their website and see how they are communicating that. So we'll go ahead and jump right in.

You can see on their home page, it's actually pretty simple. This is literally the only thing that their homepage consists of. I like the background image, but there's not a lot of information there. So from a personal standpoint, because the majority of people are looking at websites on their mobile device now, I like to see a little bit more information on the homepage. That doesn't mean that this is bad or wrong it's just a personal preference. The data would suggest that when you have less information on your homepage, obviously you're forcing people to click more, which means people are less likely to stay on your website. And so if you have more information on your homepage it gives them that ability to scroll that we've all become so accustomed to.

Let me just dive into the site a little bit. Again, the overall design is clean, it's brief; the navigation is pretty short up here. But they do have a footer navigation which again, limits the ability for people to find what they're looking for. The reason that is, is because we're creatures of habit. We know to look in the header for what it is that we're looking for in a website. That doesn't again mean that that's a bad thing, it just means that it's unusual to see that.

So we'll go ahead—and they obviously want us to "Learn More" or to take a look at the "Messages". So I have had the privilege of meeting Darren a few years back. I was a youth pastor prior to starting Ministry Designs and Darren was a part of our youth camp that I was facilitating. And so I got the chance to meet him a little bit. He gave a message at that camp and it was phenomenal so I have no doubt that the sermons are wonderful, so we're going to go ahead and skip that. We want to "Learn More" about the church because that's really why we're here. Looks like they've got a Vision Sunday coming up. They educate you on how to park; they give you directions. They're doing some hurricane relief response. This is a great feature here, "Frequently Asked Questions". So a lot of times you don't see "Frequently Asked Questions" on a church website but I love that they've put that here.

So again, if I wanted to click through the individual campuses—we'll go to the Franklin campus because I think that's their primary campus—it gives you some more information: what's happening, some updated events and those kind of things. Let's check out the KidCity here. Lot of white space … (I'm New—let's see if it takes me

back—oh it takes me back to a different page) … so I'm clicking through this website in real time with you, and just my initial knee-jerk response to this, is honestly it's a little bit confusing to navigate as I'm clicking through the website and kind of analyzing it for the first time. If I'm a parent with children, or if I'm maybe a first-time visitor to the church, I'm not going to know exactly what to look for, or where to look for it, and so I may abandon this website, just because of the difficulty to navigate.

I love that they have the Vision Sunday video right here—that's also helpful. They tell us what to expect in the "I'm New" section … "Who We Are". We've got some good information here—the "Vision and Values"—people actually do look at that information, so it's good to have.

With that said, I want to go ahead and jump over into some of the technical aspects. So if we look at the site speed from Google—the mobile site speed—it looks like it needs a little bit of work. 72 is by far not the worst I've seen; it's also not the best that I've seen. Their desktop however, it's pretty good. And I think that that's because of the limited amount of content on the home page so there's not really a lot to optimize there.

So this is a tool that was produced by HubSpot, and basically what it is, is it's an overall website grader. And it kind of audits things like performance, mobile responsiveness, the SEO of the site, like the on-page optimization of the site, and the website security. So it says "This site is ok", which I can understand why, and we'll jump into a little bit more of that when we get down to the SEO section. The performance is pretty good, like we already saw thanks to Google. A couple of things that they could increase there. Notice that the page speed is really good. We don't ever want to see that load speed higher than about four seconds. If they can get that down between two and three seconds they'd be in a better spot. Mobile-friendly: they get a 30 out of 30 so that's phenomenal.

So their SEO grade is a little bit lacking. I've actually noticed that with a lot of churches that I review their website on, that I think there's just a general lack of search engine optimization, and people don't necessarily understand the value of having your website rank higher in the search engines. So a real simple thing that they could do is just add a sitemap. You know, there are free sitemap generators that they can generate the sitemap and then submit that to their google webmaster tools. And what it does, is it gives Google a more clear picture of the layout of their website and helps Google then index the pages more effectively, therefore then ranking the site a little bit higher.

They have no headers on their website so they need H1 tags/H2 tags. An H1 tag would be the primary goal of the site. You could have a couple of H2 tags which would maybe … So an example of an H1 tag would be: "City Church—Nashville" and then an H2 tag could be some subcategories inside of that website. They have no header tags in that home page so it's hurting their SEO grade. The security is a big thing, again, there's no SSL certificate on this site, just like Scottsdale Bible. They for some reason have not added an SSL certificate, but this will also help their overall SEO grade. Because Google has now publicly come out and said that if a site has an SSL certificate it's going to be viewed more securely in the search engines, therefore ranking higher. Because Google wants to produce the most quality and secure results possible. So if I had to make a recommendation I would say, "Add some header tags and add an SSL certificate."

So to that point, there are some things that they could do again a little bit better in their SEO. You can tell that they've probably recently given it some attention because their site traffic has just jumped astronomically in the last year. But there are some things that they're missing, right?

So if I did a search for churches in Nashville and I view the results on that, they're not even on the first page. So I'm all the way down here to result number 14, which would be the fourth result on the second page. And this has a pretty high search volume. So it looks like the search volume for this particular term is 720 organic searches a month in Google. And so, I think that if they added an SSL certificate and they put some header tags, were strategic about their page linking, created some Nashville-specific content and added it to their website, their SEO ranking would increase pretty dramatically, which would then ultimately help them leverage the search volume that's happening in their specific city on any given month.

So just a quick recap: we'll go back to the home page of Church of the City. I love the initial presentation—it's clean, it's concise, it's modern—but once I dive into the navigation, I struggle a little bit to follow the path of the

site. It's not very logically organized. I know that churches—larger churches—struggle with this but there are more effective ways to lay out your site. So if I could make a recommendation it would be to add the SSL and maybe clarify some of the navigation.

I hope this review was beneficial to you. Again, my name is Tyler Rominger. I'm from Ministry Designs. We'd love the opportunity to take a look at your church website and do a review. Thank you, I hope you're having a great day, and we'll look forward to seeing you at the next video. Make sure that you subscribe in the link below.

Links:

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1OwBHEXa0I

Ministry Designs Website: https://ministrywebsitedesigns.com/church-of-the-city/